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ABSTRACT

Based on a review of educational research and informal teacher inquiry suggesting that students could benefit from instruction to improve organizational skills, this action research project examined the effects of teaching selected organizational skills on the study habits and achievement of third and ninth graders. Participating in the study were 44 third graders from 2 classes (including 6 students with learning disabilities and 1 enrolled in the gifted program) and 24 honor level ninth graders from 2 middle class communities in northern Illinois. Student problems with organizational skills were documented by means of teacher and student surveys and observational checklists. The 3-month intervention was comprised of instruction on effective listening skills, time and material management, note-taking strategies, and metacognitive journaling incorporated into the regular classroom curriculum. Target behaviors included turning work in on time, gathering materials, following procedures, presenting finished work, and maintaining condition of materials. Post-intervention data indicated an improvement in organizational skills in the selected target areas, which suggested a possible improvement in study habits and student achievement. One exception was that ninth graders did not involve parents in checking their homework, even after intervention. Parents noted a 65 percent increase in the amount of time their child spent studying in the 9 weeks following the implementation period. Evidence of improved organizational skills was found in checklists detailing observation of student on-task behavior and surveys completed by teachers, parents, and students. (Fourteen appendices include data collection instruments, permission forms, and sample materials. Contains 13 references.) (KB)

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EFFECTS OF TEACHING ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Educational research and informal teacher inquiry suggest that students could well benefit from instruction to improve organizational skills. This research paper examined the effects of teaching selected organizational skills and how they contributed to study habits and student achievement. The targeted population of this study consisted of 44 third graders and 24 ninth graders in two middle class communities in Northern Illinois.

Initial documentation was gathered through teacher surveys, student surveys, and observational checklists. Results revealed the need for improved organizational skills. Effective listening skills, time and material management, note-taking strategies, and metacognitive journaling were then incorporated into regular classroom curriculum.

Post-intervention data indicated an improvement in organizational skills in the selected target areas, which suggested a possible improvement in study habits and student achievement. Evidence of an improvement in organizational skills includes: data from observational checklists, teacher surveys, parent surveys, and student surveys.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

"The same energy of character which renders a man a daring villain would have rendered him useful to society, had that society been well organized." This statement, made by Mary Wollstonecraft in Letter 19 of *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796), expresses the correlation between man's social behavior and the need for organization to enhance that behavior to alleviate negativity. This quote rings true for the classroom as well as society.

In the classroom many students exhibit inadequate organizational skills that contribute to poor study habits which in turn lowers achievement. This is a problem that exists, and is often manifested in lack of preparation, missing assignments,

failure to return school-to-home communications, and low test scores.

This problem is seen by parents and teachers alike, and is a concern worthy of investigation. A necessary step in the goal to attain success is to teach students organizational skills such as effective listening, time and material management, and note taking. Improved organizational skills and study habits should help diminish the numbers of missing assignments, lack of preparation, poor communication, and low test scores. This study intends to investigate the relationship between good organizational skills and better classroom achievement.

District Demographics

The research for this study was conducted at two sites in two different communities. School Site A is an elementary school consisting of first through third grades. School Site B is a co-educational four-year Catholic high school. The following figures contain information regarding survey sites and surrounding communities used as the subjects for this study.

	School A	School B
District Enrollment	1,617	1,329
School Enrollment	526	1,329
Teacher/Student Ratio	22:1	15:1
Pupil Ethnic Background		
White	98.0	90.0
Black	0.8	2.0
Hispanic	0.8	6.0
Asian	0.4	2.0
Class size	24	26
Mobility Rate	5.9	10.2
Per Pupil Expenditure	2,904.	3,106.
Teachers with Master Degrees	48	55

Figure 1: School Demographics

Surrounding Communities	School A	School B
Population	7,926	180,000
Classification	Residential	Urban
Ethnic Background (%)		
White	98.0	90.0
Black	1.0	7.1
Hispanic	0.6	3.4
Asian	0.4	1.0
Native American	0.0	0.2
Average Household Income	$ 27,654.	$ 31,768.
Schools:		
Public	4	94
Private	0	16

Figure 2: Site Demographics

Community A is a residential community with rural roots experiencing urban growth from neighboring Community B. Community B is the second largest city in the state of Illinois and is located 15 miles east of community A.

National Context of the Problem

It is a general assumption that organizational skills provide a sense of consistency to individuals so that they become life-long learners, productive members of society, and successful in the business community. According to Hatcher and Pond, authors of "Standardizing Organizational Skills for Student Success," for students to be successful in school, they must be engaged in critical thinking activities.

> Skills in organizing are an important component of critical thinking and are a prerequisite to independent thinking. In addition, students remember information more easily if it is organized rather than unorganized. Thus teaching organizational skills is important to student success, and standardizing these skills increases the likelihood that students will perceive themselves as good students who achieve academic success.(1998, p.716)

If the refinement of organizational skills produces higher

self-esteem in students, which in turn lends itself to success, students should then continue to develop their critical and independent thinking skills. Independent thinkers are the human infrastructure of society.

In the article "Had I One Wish," by Gluck, the author suggests that the difference between the Japanese student success rate verses that of the American student "...is not the number of days in the school year, the high math scores, or the school uniforms, but the daily dose of old fashioned how-to, the training in being trained" (1995, p.180). These "how-to" skills were once taught in American schools, and were in some situations, nearly all that were taught. Skills were divided into three categories: social, work and study, and health and safety. Work and study habits were comprised of preparation for work, careful methods for work, completion of work on time, making good use of time, and proper care for materials and equipment. Gluck comments on the lost practice of teaching these work and study habits:

> It was rote learning, boring details, tedious routines, to be sure, but school-and-life is like that. And knowing how to get from point A to point B prepared generations of children to manage tasks in the classroom and, later, in the real world. (1998,p.716)

As Gluck and Wollstonecraft each state, human potential is achieved when the foundation given is one of order. Likewise, most educators believe that students' success is achieved when the essential skills that have been taught are those of organization.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The focus of the problem is students' inadequate organizational skills and how they interfere with learning environments. To document the extent of students' lack of organization, teacher surveys, student surveys, and an observation checklist have been used for recording purposes during the first two quarters of the 1999-2000 school year. The targeted groups included 44 students (Grade 3) from School Site A and 24 students (Grade 9) from School Site B, for a total of 68 students.

Teacher Survey

A survey (Appendix D), was conducted to document students' organizational behaviors throughout the school setting. Surveys were sent out to 81 teachers at School Sites A and B during the first weeks of the school year. Figure 3 presents the survey results.

STATEMENT	Agree	Disagree
-Need to improve organizational skills	76	5
-Poor organization related to lower grades	70	11
-Need to improve study habits	78	3
-Poor study habits contribute to low test scores	78	3
-Organization and study habits are related	76	5
STATEMENT	**Weekly**	**Periodically**
-Instruction time teaching organization	40	41
-Instruction time teaching study habits	28	53

Figure 3: Teacher Surveys, Schools A and B (September 1999)

Figure 3 shows that 93% of the 81 teachers responding agreed that there is a need to improve students' organizational skills. The data also indicate that the majority, or 86% of the teachers, feel that poor organization and poor study skills are directly related to lower grades, including lower test scores.

Results also show that because organizational skills and study skills are related, 93% of the teachers feel that there is definite need to improve these areas. The results, at that point, varied little between the public elementary school teachers and the private secondary school teachers. Therefore, the researchers inferred that there is a common desire to improve these areas among most teachers at different levels.

The relationship between the amount and frequency of instructional time spent on teaching organization and study habits was determined by the researchers to be an even divide between the teaching of organizational skills on a weekly basis, as well as periodically. According to the data, teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels address the teaching of study habits as they are needed. Although the researchers determined that these skills are indeed being taught, the extent to which they are being taught is still uncertain.

Results also show that 65% of time lost on a daily basis is less than five minutes, while 35% of teachers are losing between

five to ten minutes a day. The researchers believe that although this is not an alarming amount of time it deserves improvement.

Lastly, the researchers identified the top priority of both elementary and secondary educators - the need for study skills and study tools, followed closely by homework being completed and returned on time.

Student Survey

A survey (Appendix E), was developed by the researchers to ascertain the students' perceptions (in Grades 3 and 9) regarding their own organizational skills. Results of the student surveys from School Sites A and B are detailed below.

Of the 68 students surveyed, 44 were third grade students and 24 were ninth graders. Survey results were similar, with the exception of questions 6 and 8 regarding homework. Of the 44 third graders, 62% of them answered Question 6 saying it takes them between 10 and 20 minutes a night to do homework, while 1 % of the 24 ninth graders surveyed answered the same. The majority, or 66% of the ninth graders, indicated that it takes them

between one and two hours a night to do homework, whereas only 7% of the third graders answered the same. The researchers conclude that the reason for the difference would be the age of those surveyed, including the expectations of each particular age group. Question 8 referred to how often parents are asked to check homework. Thirty-seven percent of students surveyed in grade 3 have parents check homework every night, while apparently no ninth graders' parents do. This suggests that the work turned in by third graders is likely to be neater than the work turned in by ninth graders, if only because it is checked over.

Observation Checklist

An observational checklist of students' organizational behavior (Appendix F), was constructed to aid in the recording of specific behaviors. The researchers observed the targeted students during instructional time over the course of the first three weeks of the school year and the fifteenth through the eighteenth weeks of the same school year. A summary of

averages of the observations is presented in Figure 4.

Observed Behavior	Grade 3	Grade 9
- Work Turned in on Time	2	2
- Gathering Materials	3	3
- Following Procedures	3	2
- Presentation of Finished Work	2	3
- Condition of Materials	3	3

1=Consistent 2=Frequent 3=Sporadic

Figure 4: Comparison of Organizational Behaviors, Schools A and B, Grades 3 and 9(September, 1999)

Figure 4 presents the averages of Student Organizational Behaviors for Grades 3 and 9. The averages were taken from a three-day checklist, done in September, 1999. Behaviors were given the rating 1, 2, or 3. A 1 meant a consistent display of that behavior, a 2 meant a frequent display, and a 3 meant a sporadic display of that behavior. The researchers determined that although the averages themselves are not alarming, it is in the best interest of all to improve these skills and teach them as part of our curriculum, rather than teach them as needed. It appears that the only differences in responses were in Following Procedures and Presentation of Finished Work. Evidently,

ninth graders show more respect and independence in following procedures. On the other hand, third graders are more likely to have parents check their work; therefore, it tends to be completed with more care.

Probable Causes

While it is true that some students are able to compensate for poor organizational skills because they exhibit exceptional test-taking strategies, it is not debatable that students could benefit from instruction in study and organizational skills.

Dodd states that more and more students are arriving at colleges and universities increasingly unprepared; because of this many colleges are requiring students to take study skills classes (1988, p.2). Certainly with the growing need for organizational and study skill instruction at the post-secondary level, the same instruction could be beneficial at the high school and elementary levels.

As the data collected indicate there is a need to improve

students' study and organizational skills, few will refute this statement. Even though some of these strategies may have been taught at an early level, they have not been mastered by third grade. Baseline data should suggest ninth graders do possess these skills; however, data indicate a lack of mastery at this level as well.

Whether due to inconsistent reinforcement or some other unknown cause, it is logical to conclude that all students could benefit from consistent incorporation of instruction of these skills into the curriculum.

Unless there is a concentrated effort made in the promotion of mastery of these strategies, the skills will not be present. Concentration on the mastery of these skills within the curriculum will be the focus of the intervention addressed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

A review of literature suggested that organizational skills integrated with curriculum fare better than teaching organizational skills in isolation or not at all. The selected strategies which are intended to improve organizational skills are discussed in the succeeding portions of Chapter 3, and include the following: effective listening, time and material management, note-taking, and metacognitive journaling.

Population

The target population of this study consists of two 3rd grade classes at School Site A for a total of 44 students, including six LD students and one enrolled in the Gifted Program. School Site B population includes twenty-four 9th grade Honor level students,

14 girls and 10 boys.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of integrating organization skills within the curriculum during the third quarter period of January 2000 to March 2000, the targeted population will improve organizational skills as measured by surveys and behavior checklists. To accomplish the project objective, the researchers proposed using organizational learning activities in various subject areas.

Project Action Plan

Action plan for the intervention:

I. Learning activities that address important organizational skills within specific subject areas will be developed and implemented in the classroom.

A. Effective Listening

1. 3rd Grade Reading Classroom
   a. comprehension questions
   b. character drawing activity

(Implementation: every day for 30 minutes)

2. 9th Grade English Classroom
   a. critiquing activity (Appendix G)
   b. comprehension questions

(Implementation: 2 times a week for 15 minutes)

B. Time and Material Management

1. 3rd Grade Social Studies Classroom
    a. working Spanish Portfolio
    b. student selected final portfolio
2. 3rd Grade Science Classroom
    a. working Invention Portfolio
    b. student selected final portfolio

(Implementation: 4 days a week for 20 minutes)

3. 9th Grade English Classroom
    a. working Shakespeare Portfolio
    b. student selected final portfolio

(Implementation: every day for 20 minutes)

C. Note-Taking

1. 3rd Grade Social Studies Classroom
    a. research project
    b. organization in writing
2. 3rd Grade English Classroom
    a. graphic organizer (Appendix H)
    b. outlining

(Implementation: every day for 30 minutes)

3. 9th Grade English Classroom
    a. outlining expository writing
    b. speech outline (Appendix I)
4. 9th Grade English Classroom
    a. reading/response journal (Appendix J)
    b. précis/summary writing

(Implementation: 3 times a week for 15 minutes)

D. Metacognitive Journaling

1. 3rd Grade Science Classroom
    a. PMI on ecosystems (Appendix K)
    b. sentence stems

2. 3rd Grade Math Classroom
    a. process explanation (Appendix L)
    b. KWL

(Implementation: every day for 25 minutes)

3. 9th Grade English Classroom
    a. reflective writing
    b. self-evaluation on public speaking

(Implementation: 3 times a week for 10 minutes)

Methods of Assessment

To assess the effects of the implementation, four measurement tools were used. First, the researchers recorded on task behaviors on observation checklists. In addition, a student survey and teacher survey were distributed and collected both before and after the implementation period. Finally, a parent survey was distributed at the end of the 2000 school year. Each of these survey tools were used to assess the degree to which the targeted behaviors were consistently displayed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this educational project was to promote the mastery of organizational skills such as effective listening skills, time and material management, note-taking skills, and metacognitive journaling techniques. The implementation of these strategies within the curriculum was selected to effect the desired changes.

The intervention was implemented at two school sites. School Site A is an elementary school consisting of 1st through 3rd grades. School Site B is a co-educational 4-year Catholic high school. School Site A, two third grade classes of 23 students each, concentrated on the specific organizational skills within

the Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum. School Site B, one ninth grade class consisting of 24 students, concentrated on the same organizational skills within the honors level English curriculum.

School Site A

These classrooms addressed effective listening in the content area of Reading. The first strategy implemented was the increased use of comprehension questions at the end of stories read orally in Reading class. After a selection was read aloud by the students in Reading class, comprehension questions were asked that required students to recall details, order events and predict future events. This was done a total of four times during the 9-week study.

During this time, School Site A also completed four Character-drawing activities in the 3rd grade Reading classroom to encourage better listening skills. The researchers read a story to the students asking them to pay close attention to details they hear. Upon hearing the story, the students were asked to select

a character based on descriptions and characteristics they heard and draw a detailed picture of that character.

The next focus of this study was in the area of Time and Material Management. School Site A implemented the use of portfolios in the areas of Social Studies and Science.

In Social Studies, a working portfolio was kept as part of a 4-week Spanish unit taught to third graders. Items collected in the portfolio included graphic organizers, mosaic art projects, reflective questions, map skill sheets, vocabulary puzzles, and teacher made tests and quizzes. At the end of the unit, students were encouraged to select artifacts from the working portfolio to create a final portfolio for an evaluation. Students were asked to choose the items they felt best represented the amount of time and effort they put forth.

In Science, students compiled activities from an Invention unit to be included in a working portfolio. During a four week period, students researched an invention, wrote a report and created a poster that included the research and

pictures. The students also read about famous inventors and inventions that changed our lives. They completed time-lines, crossword puzzles, and took a test at the end of the unit on Inventions. Students selected items to be included in their final portfolio based on the amount of time and effort it took for completion of the different elements. These two units enhanced time and material management because it allowed students to keep track of required materials and controlled the selection process of those materials.

Note-taking was another element in improving organizational strategies. School Site A taught this concept in the Social Studies and English areas.

In Social Studies, a four-week research project on the United States was taught to increase note-taking skills. Students were assigned a state to research and develop a report on. Students were required to organize their notes in a way that would make their report most effective. An organizational outline was provided to the third graders to help them

organize and develop their information in a way that created a well-managed presentation. For the final grade, students were asked to put together a poster display and oral presentation of their research. The focus of the organizational outline and preparation of the presentation encouraged the need for effective organization of facts in writing.

Prior to beginning a unit in English note-taking was introduced by using graphic organizers. The graphic organizers were used as a pre-writing strategy to improve organization of thoughts.

These strategies were implemented to help students write narrative, persuasive, and expository essays. The use of the web as a graphic organizer enabled the students to focus upon the main idea or topic sentence as well as detail sentences to support the main idea. The students then completed an outline to organize and begin writing a 5-paragraph essay.

School Site A implemented methods of metacognitive journaling in the areas of Science and Math. The use of

metacognitive journaling helped the students reflect upon their own thought processes while reinforcing the skills taught in these areas.

In Science, a PMI was one of the reflective journaling strategies used upon completion of a four week unit on Ecosystems. This activity allowed the students time to reflect on the things they enjoyed (Pluses), the things they did not enjoy (Minuses), and what they found enlightening (Interesting). Sentence stems were also given to the students to complete. This strategy allowed them to share their thoughts about what they learned and what they were still curious about learning.

In the area of 3rd grade Math, School Site A began asking for process explanation pieces three times a week at the end of Math lessons. For example, students were asked to explain why they solved a certain math problem the way they did. The students were also asked to explain a math concept to another student in writing. By writing about their thinking, students had an understanding of their thinking process and the importance of

details. The process explanations had to be written in complete, detailed sentences.

A KWL (Know/Want/Learned) was implemented at the beginning of new math concepts (twice in the nine weeks) to get a feel for where the students at School Site A were prior to jumping into a new concept. The KWL also allowed students to have a preview of the new math concept. Students are likely to be better thinkers when they know what to expect. The K would address the already known facts and ideas; the W would address the wanted to learn ideas, and the L would summarize the lessons taught by addressing what was learned.

School Site B

School Site B lessons were planned and presented within the ninth grade honors English curriculum during the third nine-week period of the 1999-2000 school year. The curriculum for this quarter involved a unit on Wm. Shakespeare and *Romeo and Juliet,* and a separate unit on formal speech technique.

Effective listening skills were incorporated in a speech

exercise where students were required to write evaluative critiques following formal presentations made by their classmates. Students were given a list of things to listen for. This activity was done five times during the nine-week period.

Another activity used for improving effective listening was providing comprehension questions prior to the audiotape reading of various scenes from *Romeo and Juliet.* This activity was used eight times during the implement period.

For time and material management skill improvement, the students at School Site B were assigned a portfolio project, which lasted the entire nine-week period. This was a working portfolio project where students were required to complete six of seven writing assignments, each due by a different specified date. The final portfolio contained four student-selected pieces and was due at the end of the nine-week period.

Several note-taking strategies were implemented during the Shakespeare and Speech units. Students were taught and expected to correctly utilize the 5-Paragraph Theme

organizational outline, which also functions as a proper organizational outline for an informative speech. The students used this strategy four times during the nine-week period. Another note-taking strategy was the continued use of the Précis. Students were previously taught the Précis writing technique and were required to use it within a Reading/Response journal while reading *Romeo and Juliet.* The journal was collected and evaluated by using a rubric (Appendix J) following the completion of the reading assignment.

The final organizational skill implementation in the curriculum was reflective writing and self-evaluation. Students were asked to reflect upon the process of the student-selected portfolio and include that reflection with that portfolio. Students were also assigned a self-evaluation following each of the four formal speaking assignments during the quarter.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

To assess the effects of implementing organizational

skills within the curriculum, four measurement tools were used. Observational checklists were maintained through out the intervention period. Student surveys were distributed before and after the implementation period, and parent surveys were distributed and collected at the end of the school year. Teacher surveys were distributed at the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year.

Observational Checklists

Using observational checklists, the researchers recorded targeted behaviors during the months of January, February, and March, 2000. This data is presented in Figure 5 (School Site A) and in Figure 6 (School Site B).

Observed Behavior	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
- Work Turned in on Time	2	2	1
- Gathering Materials	3	2	2
- Following Procedures	3	3	2
- Presentation of Finished Work	2	1	1
- Condition of Materials	2	2	2

1=Consistent 2=Frequent 3=Sporadic

Figure 5: Averages of Organizational Behaviors, School Site A January 2000 through March 2000

Figure 5 presents the averages of students' organizational behaviors for the two third grade classes at School Site A. Students displayed an improvement in the amount of work turned in on time and procedures followed. Two other areas that showed improvement were gathering materials, and presentation of finished work. The researchers found no improvement in the condition of materials.

Observed behavior	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
- Work Turned in on Time	2	2	2
- Gathering Materials	3	2	2
- Following Procedures	2	2	2
- Presentation of Finished Work	3	2	1
- Condition of Materials	3	2	2

1=Consistent 2=Frequent 3=Sporadic

Figure 6: Averages of Organizational Behaviors, School Site B January 2000 through March 2000

Figure 6 shows the averages of students' organizational behaviors for the ninth grade class at School Site B. Although the students generally were consistent in handing in work on time and following procedures, they did improve in time spent on

gathering materials, and the condition of materials. The researchers also saw marked improvement in the presentation of the finished work.

Student Survey

Students in School Site A and School Site B were given a survey in June of 2000. This survey was the same survey given prior to the study (Appendix E). Results showed more of an awareness of organization and study skills in all areas than was previously shown. Survey results depicted equal similarities in all areas this time except Question 8 regarding parents checking over homework. This survey showed 82% of students surveyed in Grade 3 have parents check homework every night, as opposed to the previous 37%. Apparently, still no ninth graders have parents check their work. The researchers now believe that ninth graders simply do not involve their parents in all aspects of their schoolwork.

Parent Surveys

Parents of the target population were surveyed in June of

2000. At that time parents were asked to comment on the at home study behaviors of their children. Parents at both school sites noted a 65% increase in the amount of time their child spent studying in the nine weeks following the implementation period. When asked whether they thought improved study habits positively effected their child's grades, 88% of the parents believed it to be true.

Teacher Surveys

A follow up teacher survey for School Site A was given in September of 2000. The results of this survey are presented in Figure 7.

Observed Behavior			
	Consistent	Frequent	Sporadic
Ability to listen and follow procedures	20	14	10
Using time wisely and gathering materials	23	12	9
	Many Details	Few Details	No Details
When note-taking, notes contain	16	18	10
Ability to write about thinking	18	18	8

Figure 7: Number of Observed Behaviors, School Site A September 2000

Figure 7 depicts the results of a survey given to 4th grade teachers at School Site A during the second week of September 2000. A list of the previously targeted students was attached to the survey and teachers were asked to pay particular attention to these students in regards to this survey. Results of this survey showed little improvement in all areas. Figure 8 represents the results of the same survey at School Site B.

Observed Behaviors			
	Consistent	Frequent	Sporadic
Ability to listen and follow procedures	18	4	2
Using time wisely and gathering materials	20	3	1
	Many Details	Few Details	No Details
When note-taking, notes contain	19	5	0
Ability to write about thinking	22	2	0

Figure 8: Number of Observed Behaviors, School Site B
May 2000

Figure 8 illustrates the results of a survey given to 9th grade Honors Program teachers at School Site B during the month of May, 2000. A list of the targeted students was attached to the survey and teachers were asked to pay particular attention to

these students in regards to this survey. Results of this survey showed an improvement in the targeted organizational behaviors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on observational checklists, student surveys, parent surveys, and teacher surveys the students showed an overall improvement in targeted behaviors.

The data collected for School Site A and School Site B, over the research period, indicates that students from both school sites improved in the areas of gathering materials, following procedures and the presentation of finished work. While School Site A showed an improvement in turning work in on time, School Site B demonstrated an improvement in the condition of materials brought to class. One indication of improvement at School Site A was that teachers spent less time following up on

missing assignments. School Site B's indicator was that students spent less time returning to their lockers for materials. The researchers determined that the inclusion of specific organizational skills in the curriculum prompted students to develop an awareness of their own organizational study behaviors and patterns. Parents indicated that their children were spending more time studying and therefore, finding more classroom success. Teachers, when asked to observe the targeted focus group, believed that in comparison to historical behaviors of 4th and 9th grade students, the targeted students showed better organizational study behaviors.

Upon completion of this research project, despite evidence of success, the researchers recommend improvements in the duration of implementation of this study. The researchers suggest that although results were promising, it yields a longer implementation period. In a perfect world, the infusion of these skills would begin in kindergarten and continue through high school. Researchers Monohan, Ognibene, and Torrisi believe the

proper training of organization in school can render each person successful to society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Student Release Form

Saint Xavier University

Consent To Participate in a Research Study

"Improving Student Organizational Skills for Success"

Dear Parents,

I am currenly involved in a master's program through Saint Xavier University. As part of this program, I am required to set up an action research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between good organizational skills and better classroom achievement.

During the course of the 1999-2000 school year our class will participate in a program that will enhance organizational and study skill development. I fully expect this program to enrich our curriculum. As part of this program I will be monitoring behaviors and providing positive direction in order to improve these necessary life skills.

This study is completely voluntary. Your child's identity throughout this project will remain anonymous. It will not, in any way, affect his/her grade if you choose not to let him/her participate in this study. However, since the activities are part of daily lesson plans, your child will be required to complete regular classroom activities and assignments, and any information regarding your child would not be used in the study.

I would really appreciate your cooperation, as this project will greatly benefit your child. It will foster your child's learning. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Sean Monahan

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD RETURN THIS FORM PROMPTLY IF YOU DO NOT WISH HIM/HER TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DATA COLLECTION.

_____ **No, I do not wish for my child to participate in the data collection.**

Student Name _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____

Appendix B

Student Release Form

Saint Xavier University

Consent To Participate in a Research Study

"Improving Student Organizational Skills for Success"

Dear Parents,

I am currenly involved in a master's program through Saint Xavier University. As part of this program, I am required to set up an action research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between good organizational skills and better classroom achievement.

During the course of the 1999-2000 school year our class will participate in a program that will enhance organizational and study skill development. I fully expect this program to enrich our curriculum. As part of this program I will be monitoring behaviors and providing positive direction in order to improve these necessary life skills.

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I would really appreciate your cooperation, as this project will greatly benefit your child. It will foster your child's learning. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Beth Ognibene

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD RETURN THIS FORM PROMPTLY IF YOU DO NOT WISH HIM/HER TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DATA COLLECTION.

_____ **No, I do not wish for my child to participate in the data collection.**

Student Name _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____

Appendix C

Student Release Form

Saint Xavier University

Consent To Participate in a Research Study

"Improving Student Organizational Skills for Success"

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I am currenly involved in a master's program through Saint Xavier University. As part of this program, I am required to set up an action research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between good organizational skills and better classroom achievement.

During the course of the 1999-2000 school year our class will participate in a program that will enhance organizational and study skill development. I fully expect this program to enrich our curriculum. As part of this program I will be monitoring behaviors and providing positive direction in order to improve these necessary life skills.

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I would really appreciate your cooperation, as this project will greatly benefit your child. It will foster your child's learning. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Anne Torrisi

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD RETURN THIS FORM PROMPTLY IF YOU DO NOT WISH HIM/HER TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DATA COLLECTION.

_____ **No, I do not wish for my child to participate in the data collection.**

Student Name _____

Parent/Guardian signature _____

Appendix D
Pre-Teacher Survey

TEACHER SURVEY
STUDENT ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS/STUDY HABITS

Please respond to the following questions using the scale below.

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree
DK = Don't Know
D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

1) To what extent do you perceive the following statements to be accurate?

There is a need to improve students' organizational skills.
SA A DK D SD

Poor organizational skills are directly related to lower grades.
SA A DK D SD

There is a need to improve students' study habits.
SA A DK D SD

Poor study habits contribute to lower test scores.
SA A DK D SD

Study habits and organizational skills are related.
SA A DK D SD

2) Please take a moment to evaluate the time spent on the following skills.(circle one)

How much class instructional time do you devote to teaching organizational skills?

Some every day Some 2-3 times a week
Happens periodically Seldom happens

Appendix D, continued

How much class instructional time do you devote to teaching Study skills?

Some every day **Some 2-3 times a week**
Happens periodically **Seldom happens**

At what point in the year do you customarily teach study skills and organizational skills?

Beginning only **Regularly throughout**
Periodically as needed **Seldom have time**

Estimate how much class instructional time is lost each day searching for lost materials and supplies.

Less than 5 Minutes **5-10 minutes**
10-20 minutes **20-30 minutes**
More

3) Prioritize the following organizational skills and study skills with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

Materials to class

Teacher notes returned to class

Having a clean desk/locker

Homework completed and returned

Need for study skills/habits/tools

Appendix E
Pre/Post Student Survey

1) In the classroom you: (you may choose more than one)
   _____ concentrate on taking notes
   _____ concentrate on listening
   _____ sit in the front of the class
   _____ sit in the back of the class
   _____ sit near a window or door

1) Do you study: ____ at home ____ at school ____ at the library

3) Do you study:
   _____ every night _____ mainly on the weekends
   _____ in the morning _____ in the evening
   _____ before dinner _____ after dinner

4) Do you study:
   _____ alone _____ with a friend
   _____ in a group _____ with music
   _____ in front of a TV _____ in a quiet room

5) How long do you study?
   _____ 0 – 10 minutes _____ 10 – 20 minutes
   _____ 20 – 40 minutes _____ 40 – 60 minutes

6) How long does it take you to do your homework?
   _____ 10 – 20 minutes _____ 20 – 45 minutes
   _____ 45 – 60 minutes _____ 1 – 2 hours

7) Do you ask your parents to help you with your homework?
   _____ yes _____ no

8) How often do you ask your parents to check your homework?
   _____ every night _____ once a week _____ never
   _____ 2 times a week _____ 3 times a week

Appendix E, continued

9) What do your parents think about homework?
_____ for _____ against

10) What do you think about homework?
_____ for _____ against

11) How often do you complete your homework?
_____ always _____ sometimes _____ never

12) Do you get information that was discussed on the day that you were absent?
_____ yes _____ no

13) Do you come prepared to class?
_____ always _____ sometimes _____ never

14) Do you know how to outline?
_____ yes _____ no

15) Do you use flashcards?
_____ yes _____ no

16) Do you read the directions?
_____ always _____ sometimes _____ never

17) Do you answer questions in order on a test?
_____ yes _____ no

18) Are you afraid to take tests?
_____ always _____ sometimes _____ never

Appendix F
Student Organizational Behavior Checklist

Student's Name	Work in On time	Time spent On material	Following procedures	Presentation Of work	Condition Of work

1 = CONSISTENT 2 = FREQUENT 3 = SPORADIC

Appendix G
Student Speech Reflection

Directions: Answer in well thought out complete sentences.

1) Was your topic interesting and appropriate for your audience? Why or why not?

2) Did you feel comfortable and knowledgeable with your topic? Why or why not?

3) Did you read your speech from note-cards? How did that add to or detract from your speech?

4) Did you grab your audience's attention? Could your hook have been more interesting? How?

5) Do you feel your information was organized logically and easy to follow?

Appendix G, continued

6) Did your conclusion restate your thesis and give a definite signal to the audience that you were done?

7) What did you notice about the audience's behavior during your speech? How did it affect you?

8) Were you nervous at all? Did your nervousness affect your verbals? Your non-verbals? Which ones?

9) Based on the following description give yourself a grade for this speech and explain why you feel you deserve that grade.

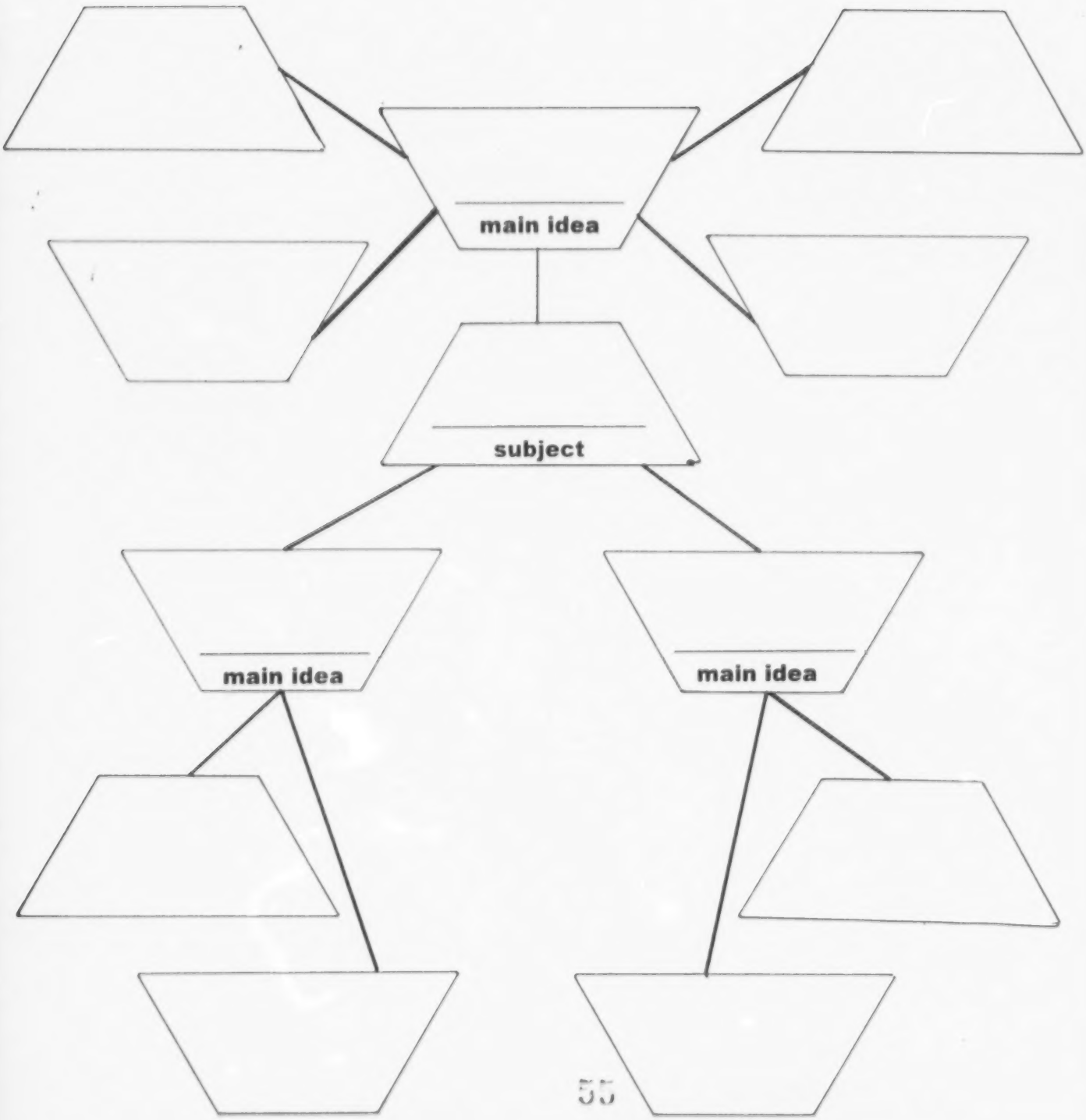
A = excellent presentation/exceeded all areas of evaluation

B = very good presentation/met all expectations of evaluation

C = average presentation/met many areas of evaluation

D = below average presentation/met some areas of evaluation

Appendix H
Graphic Organizer



Appendix I
Principles of Speech
Outline Exercise

Directions: match the items in column A with the entries for column B.

Column A

1. The second major step is preparation of the speech.
2. First, find a practice audience.
3. Follow these steps, and you will make an effective presentation-and be happy with your success.
4. Ask also: What can I find out about this topic?
5. What is worse than a lot of things we can imagine?
6. Remember that stage fright is a desirable reaction.
7. In planning, initially focus on yourself as speaker and ask some key questions.
8. A second part of research is to listen, to radio, television, and to people who have information.
9. I will present today three steps for success in making an effective presentation.
10. In terms of the audience, ask at the outset: What do these people know and care about this topic?
11. The next task is to write the speech.
12. The third major step is to practice the speech.
13. After organizing the material, put it on paper, preferably in the form of an outline.
14. Then in planning further, focus on the potential listeners.
15. Practice actual delivery of the speech in front of volunteer listeners.
16. We all know what a struggle it is to make a speech, but we all desire to succeed and do a good job.
17. The first major step is to plan the speech.
18. The first part of research is to read and take notes.
19. So work on using your knowledge of stage fright to turn it to your advantage.
20. The first task of preparation is to conduct research.
21. In writing the speech, first organize your ideas and material.
22. Remember to practice good eye contact.
23. So, remember that the major steps are planning, preparation, and practice.
24. Ask, first of all: What do I already know about this topic?
25. Also in terms of potential audience ask: What can I motivate them to listen to?
26. Additionally, engage in some practice handling stage fright.
27. These three steps are planning, preparing, and practicing.
28. Select an interesting, motivating topic, research your topic, and rehearse in front of a practice audience.

Column B

I. Introduction
- A _____
- B _____
- C _____
- D _____

II. Body
- A _____
  - 1 _____
    - a _____
    - b _____
  - 2 _____
    - a _____
    - b _____
- B _____
  - 1 _____
    - a _____
    - b _____
  - 2 _____
    - a _____
    - b _____
- C _____
  - 1 _____
    - a _____
    - b _____
  - 2 _____
    - a _____
    - b _____

III. Conclusion
- A _____
- B _____
- C _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix J
Reading Response Journal

ACT/SCENE	READING NOTES	RESPONSES
Ii		
Iii		
Iiii		
Iiv		
Iv		
IIi		
IIii		
IIiii		
IIiv		
IIv		
IIvi		
IIIi		
IIIii		
IIIiii		
IIIiv		
IIIv		
IVi		
IVii		
IViii		
IViv		
IVv		
Vi		
Vii		
Viii		
TOTAL		

Each section of this assignment is worth 5 points for a total of 240 points.

223-240 = A
212-222 = B
185-211 = C

Appendix K
P.M.I.

ECOSYSTEM REFLECTION

What I liked most about this science unit on ecosystems

_____

_____

_____

What I did not like about this science unit

_____

_____

_____

What I learned about ecosystems

_____

_____

_____

Appendix L
Process Explanation

NAME _____

In math, we have been studying even and odd numbers. We Just heard the story, Curious George Rides a Bike, and George Becomes an assistant to the paperboy. He is a good assistant, But he needs our help. The boy asks George one morning to deliver papers to the odd-numbered houses on the street. Please write a letter to George explaining what an odd or even number is.

Appendix M
Parent Survey

Please answer the following 3 questions as carefully as possible. Thank you for your support.

1) **Has the amount of time your child spends studying increased in the last nine weeks?**

_____ **INCREASED**

_____ **DECREASED**

_____ **REMAINED THE SAME**

2) **On the average, how much timee would you say your child spends studying, on a daily basis?**

_____ **NO MORE THAN 15 MINUTES A NIGHT**

_____ **15 – 30 MINUTES A NIGHT**

_____ **30 MINUTES TO AN HOUR A NIGHT**

_____ **AN HOUR OR MORE A NIGHT**

3) **Do you feel your child's study habits are positively affecting your child's grades?**

_____ **YES**

_____ **NO**

_____ **I DON'T KNOW**

Appendix N
Post-Teacher Survey

TEACHER SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the following questions. Your answers are extremely important to us, as they are a follow-up to our action research. A list of students we would like you to observe is attached.

1) **In general, when observing these students' ability to listen effectively and follow procedures, would you say they are:**

_____consistent _____frequent _____sporadic

2) **In relation to using time wisely and in the gathering of needed materials for a lesson, would you say these students are:**

_____consistent _____frequent _____sporadic

3) **When it comes to note-taking skills, would you say these students' notes have**

_____many details _____few details _____no details

4) **In the area of metacognitive journaling, would you rate these students' ability to write about their thinking as having**

_____many details _____few details _____no details